

WHAT IS CLAIMED AS NEW AND IS DESIRED TO BE SECURED BY
LETTERS PATENT OF THE UNITED STATE IS:

1. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

a photographing optical system configured to perform
a photographing operation and accommodated in the camera
body, the photographing optical system having a
photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to
a thickness direction of the camera body and a
photographing object side plane, the photographing object
side plane facing an object to be photographed when
photographing; and

a release button configured to activate the
photographing operation of the photographing optical system
provided on a side surface of the camera body corresponding
with the photographing object side plane of the
photographing optical system.

2. The camera of Claim 1, wherein the release button
is provided on a right side part of the side surface of the
camera body.

3. The camera of Claim 1, wherein the photographing
optical system includes a solid-state photographing element
configured to convert an image of an object photographed
into image data.

4. The camera of Claim 3, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

5. The camera of Claim 3, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

6. The camera of Claim 3, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

7. The camera of Claim 6, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

8. The camera of Claim 6, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

9. The camera of Claim 1, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

10. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation and accommodated in the camera body, the photographing optical system having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the camera body and a

photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing;

a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system and provided on an upper surface of the camera body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object to be photographed; and

a grip protruding from a bottom surface of the camera body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object.

11. The camera of Claim 10, wherein:

the release button is provided on a right side part of the upper surface of the camera body; and

the grip protrudes from a right side part of the bottom surface of the camera body.

12. The camera of Claim 10, wherein the grip is detachable from the camera body.

13. The camera of Claim 10, wherein the grip is rotatably provided to a side edge of the camera body so as to be capable of moving to a side of the camera body.

14. The camera of Claim 10, wherein the photographing optical system includes a solid-state photographing element configured to convert an image of an object photographed into image data.

15. The camera of Claim 14, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

16. The camera of Claim 14, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

17. The camera of Claim 14, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

18. The camera of Claim 17, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

19. The camera of Claim 17, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

20. The camera of Claim 10, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

21. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation and accommodated in the camera body; and

a plurality of release buttons each configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system.

22. The camera of Claim 21, wherein:

the photographing optical system having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the camera body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing surface facing an object to be photographed when photographing;

the plurality of release buttons comprises first and second release buttons;

the first release button of the plurality of release buttons is provided on a side surface of the camera body corresponding with the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system; and

the second release button of the plurality of release buttons is provided on an upper surface of the camera body,

the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object.

23. The camera of Claim 21, wherein the photographing optical system includes a solid-state photographing element configured to convert an image of an object photographed into image data.

24. The camera of Claim 23, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

25. The camera of Claim 23, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

26. The camera of Claim 23, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

27. The camera of Claim 26, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

28. The camera of Claim 26, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

29. The camera of Claim 21, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

30. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

photographing means for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in the camera body and having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the camera body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing; and

activating means for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means, the activating means being provided on a side surface of the camera body corresponding with the photographing object side plane of the photographing means.

31. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

photographing means for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in the camera body and having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the camera body and a photographing object plane, the photographing object plane facing an object to be

photographed when photographing;

activating means for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means, the activating means being provided on an upper surface of the camera body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing means is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing means is directed toward the object; and

gripping means for gripping the camera body, the gripping means protruding from a bottom surface of the camera body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing means is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing means is directed toward the object.

32. A camera comprising:

a camera body having a substantially flat shape; for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in the camera body; and

a plurality of activating means each for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means.

33. A method of making a camera, comprising the steps of:

forming the camera body having a substantially flat shape;

accommodating in the camera body a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation such that a photographing optical axis thereof is arranged in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the camera body; and

arranging a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system at a side surface of the camera body corresponding with a photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing.

34. The method of Claim 33, wherein the arranging step comprises arranging the release button at a right side part of the side surface of the camera body.

35. A method of making a camera, comprising the steps of:

forming a camera body having a substantially flat shape;

accommodating in the camera body a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation such that a photographing optical axis thereof is arranged in a direction perpendicular to a thickness

direction of the camera body;

arranging a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system at an upper surface of the camera body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and a photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward an object to be photographed; and

providing a grip so as to protrude from a bottom surface of the camera body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object.

36. The method of Claim 35, wherein:

the arranging step comprises arranging the release button at a right side part of the upper surface of the camera body; and

the providing step comprises providing the grip so as to protrude from a right side part of the bottom surface of the camera body.

37. The method of Claim 35, wherein the providing step comprises providing the grip so as to be detachable

from the camera body.

38. The method of Claim 35, wherein the providing step comprises rotatably providing the grip to a side edge of the camera body such that the grip is capable of moving to a side of the camera body.

39. A portable apparatus comprising:
an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;
a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation and accommodated in the apparatus body, the photographing optical system having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing; and

a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system and provided on a side surface of the apparatus body corresponding with the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system.

40. The portable apparatus of Claim 39, wherein the release button is provided on a right side part of the side surface of the apparatus body.

41. The portable apparatus of Claim 39, wherein the photographing optical system includes a solid-state photographing element configured to convert an image of an object photographed into image data.

42. The portable apparatus of Claim 41, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

43. The portable apparatus of Claim 41, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

44. The portable apparatus of Claim 41, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

45. The portable apparatus of Claim 44, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

46. The portable apparatus of Claim 44, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

47. The portable apparatus of Claim 39, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

48. A portable apparatus comprising:

an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;

a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation and accommodated in the apparatus body, the photographing optical system having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body and a photographing object plane, the photographing object plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing;

a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system and provided on an upper surface of the apparatus body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object; and

a grip protruding from a bottom surface of the apparatus body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object.

49. The portable apparatus of Claim 48, wherein:

the release button is provided on a right side part

of the upper surface of the apparatus body; and

the grip protrudes from a right side part of the bottom surface of the apparatus body.

50. The portable apparatus of Claim 48, wherein the grip is detachable from the apparatus body.

51. The portable apparatus of Claim 48, wherein the grip is rotatably provided to a side edge of the apparatus body so as to be capable of moving to a side of the apparatus body.

52. The portable apparatus of Claim 48, wherein the photographing optical system includes a solid-state photographing element configured to convert an image of an object photographed into image data.

53. The portable apparatus of Claim 52, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

54. The portable apparatus of Claim 52, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

55. The portable apparatus of Claim 52, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

56. The portable apparatus of Claim 55, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission

device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

57. The portable apparatus of Claim 55, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

58. The portable apparatus of Claim 48, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

59. A portable apparatus comprising:
an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;
a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation and accommodated in the apparatus body; and

a plurality of release buttons each configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system.

60. The portable apparatus of Claim 59, wherein:
the photographing optical system has a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing;

the plurality of release buttons comprises a first and second release buttons; and

the first release button of the plurality of release buttons is provided on a side surface of the apparatus body corresponding with the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system, and the second release button of the plurality of release buttons is provided on an upper surface of the apparatus body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the object.

61. The portable apparatus of Claim 59, wherein the photographing optical system includes a solid-state photographing element configured to convert an image of an object photographed into image data.

62. The apparatus of Claim 61, further comprising a recording device configured to record the image data in a recording medium.

63. The apparatus of Claim 61, further comprising a display device configured to display at least one of the image and the image data.

64. The apparatus of Claim 61, further comprising a communication device configured to transmit the image data.

65. The apparatus of Claim 64, wherein the communication device includes a wireless transmission

device configured to transmit the image data to a remote terminal by wireless transmission.

66. The apparatus of Claim 64, wherein the communication device includes an interface device configured to transmit the image data to a terminal via a cable.

67. The apparatus of Claim 59, further comprising a wireless telephone device.

68. A portable apparatus comprising:

an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape; photographing means for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in the apparatus body and having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing; and

activating means for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means, the activating means being provided on a side surface of the apparatus body corresponding with the photographing object side plane of the photographing means.

69. A portable apparatus comprising:

an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;

photographing means for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in the apparatus body and having a photographing optical axis in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body and a photographing object side plane, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing;

activating means for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means, the activating means being provided on an upper surface of the apparatus body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing means is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing means is directed toward the object; and

gripping means for gripping the apparatus body, the gripping means protruding from a bottom surface of the apparatus body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing means is horizontal and the photographing object side plane of the photographing means is directed toward the object.

70. A portable apparatus comprising:

an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;

photographing means for performing a photographing operation, the photographing means being accommodated in

the apparatus body; and

a plurality of activating means each for activating the photographing operation of the photographing means.

71. A method of making a portable apparatus, comprising the steps of:

forming the apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;

accommodating in the apparatus body a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation such that a photographing optical axis thereof is arranged in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body; and

arranging a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system at a side surface of the apparatus body corresponding with a photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing.

72. The method of Claim 71, wherein the arranging step comprises arranging the release button at a right side part of the side surface of the apparatus body.

73. A method of making a portable apparatus, comprising the steps of:

forming an apparatus body having a substantially flat shape;

accommodating in the apparatus body a photographing optical system configured to perform a photographing operation such that a photographing optical axis thereof is arranged in a direction perpendicular to a thickness direction of the apparatus body;

arranging a release button configured to activate the photographing operation of the photographing optical system at an upper surface of the apparatus body, the upper surface facing upward when the photographing optical axis of the photographing optical system is horizontal and a photographing object side plane of the photographing optical system is directed toward the photographing object, the photographing object side plane facing an object to be photographed when photographing; and

providing a grip so as to protrude from a bottom surface of the apparatus body, the bottom surface facing downward when the photographing optical axis is horizontal and the photographing object side plane is directed toward the object.

74. The method of Claim 73, wherein:

the arranging step comprises arranging the release button at a right side part of the upper surface of the

apparatus body; and

the providing step comprising providing the grip so as to protrude from a right side part of the bottom surface of the apparatus body.

75. The method of Claim 73, wherein the providing step comprises providing the grip so as to be detachable from the apparatus body.

76. The method of Claim 73, wherein the providing step comprises rotatably providing the grip to a side edge of the apparatus body such that the grip is capable of moving to a side of the apparatus body.